



## Who can I talk to about being vaccinated against pneumococcal disease?

Provinces and territories in Canada all have their own immunization plans and programs, with their own recommendations and coverage for pneumococcal vaccination.

Do you still have questions about whether the pneumococcal vaccine is right for you? Talk to your doctor or a trusted care partner for more information! Ask if you are eligible to receive other vaccines at the same time, such as for the flu, RSV, COVID-19, shingles, and tetanus, and diphtheria.


## About Vaccines4Life

Vaccines4Life (V4L) is a program of work aimed to mobilize knowledge on the importance of a life course approach to vaccination, developed and led by the International Federation on Ageing (IFA).


Vaccines4Life work in the area of immunisation is embedded in a responsibility to older people globally, and in an effort to help influence and shape age-related policies that create an environment that enables older people to do what they have reason to value.

Visit [www.vaccines4life.com](http://www.vaccines4life.com) to know more.

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Scan the QR code to know more about Pneumococcal disease



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# PNEUMOCOCCAL DISEASE AND VACCINATION

What you should know about this disease

## What is pneumococcal disease?

Pneumococcal disease is a group of contagious diseases caused by the bacterium *Streptococcus pneumoniae* (*S. pneumoniae*).

- This bacterium commonly causes serious infections and diseases.

Pneumococcal disease is a different disease from the flu (influenza), COVID-19, and RSV (respiratory syncytial virus), and each require their own vaccines for protection.

## What are the symptoms and risks of pneumococcal disease?

Symptoms may include <sup>2</sup>:

- Cough with mucus
- Fever
- Fast breathing and heart rate
- Chest pain that feels worse when you cough or breathe in
- Tiredness or weakness

Risks may include <sup>2</sup>:

- Infection of the lungs (**pneumonia**)
- Swelling of the brain lining (**meningitis**), which can lead to deafness, brain damage, and death.
- Blood infections (**septicemia**)



## What are the potential complications of pneumococcal disease?

Infections caused by the bacterium *S. pneumoniae* are a huge cause of global illness and death.

Among Canadians 65 years and older, pneumonia on average was:

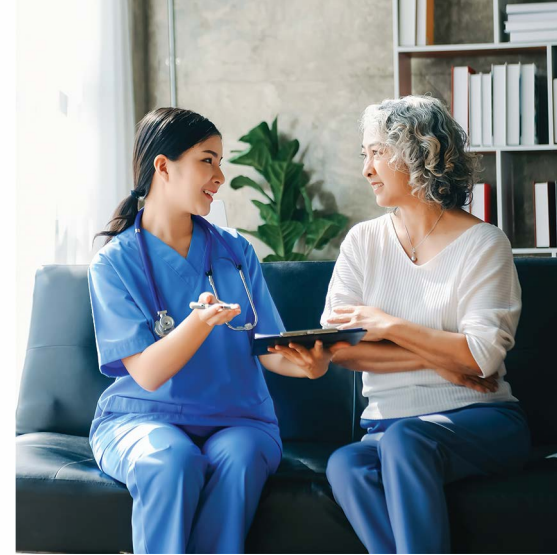
- 1 of the top 10 leading causes of hospitalizations and
- 9<sup>th</sup> most common cause of death (in addition with influenza).

## Who is at risk?

Older adults have a greater risk for complications and death from pneumococcal disease because they often have **multiple health conditions and illnesses** and **less responsive immune systems**.

Those living in **long-term care** are generally more vulnerable to illness from **congregate living** (e.g. eating together, sharing spacing and participating in group activities), which increases the spread of bacterial and viral diseases.

Those with certain **underlying medical conditions** (i.e. diabetes or chronic heart, lung, liver, or renal disease) and **specific lifestyle factors** (i.e. smokers, persons with alcoholism, persons who are homeless, use of illicit drugs) are also at risk.



## How is *S. pneumoniae* spread?

*S. pneumoniae* is spread through sneezing, coughing, or other contact with those already infected by the bacterium.

## What are the benefits of pneumococcal vaccination?

Pneumococcal vaccination offers **protection** against any pneumococcal infection that can cause hospitalization or death and makes the **disease milder** for those who become infected.



## What are some pneumococcal vaccination recommendations?

According to the **Canadian Immunization Guide**, pneumococcal vaccination for adults is recommended particularly for:

- All adults that are **65 years of age and older**
- Residents of **long-term care**
- Those at high risk of **Invasive Pneumococcal Disease (IPD)**, which is a group of serious pneumococcal infections, because of:
  - **Underlying medical conditions**, and/or
  - **Certain lifestyle factors**

## Pneumococcal vaccines in Canada

In Canada, the following vaccines are authorized for use and recommended for adults by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI):

- Pneumococcal 20-valent conjugate (Pneu-C-20) vaccine
- Pneumococcal 21-valent conjugate (Pneu-C-21) vaccine
- Pneumococcal 15-valent conjugate (Pneu-C-15) vaccine
- Pneumococcal conjugate 13-valent (Pneu-C-13) vaccine
- Pneumococcal polysaccharide 23-valent (Pneu-C-23) vaccine

NACI recommends a single dose of either the PCV20 or PCV21 vaccine for adults aged 65 and older, regardless of prior history with PCV13, PCV15 or PPV23.

There are regional and risk-factor exceptions.

**Discuss these vaccines with your doctor to understand which may be right for you.**